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YOUNG MEN: FAULTS AND IDEALS.

A FAMILIAR TALK,

WITH

QUOTATIONS FROM LETTERS.

BY

J. R. MILLER, D.D.,

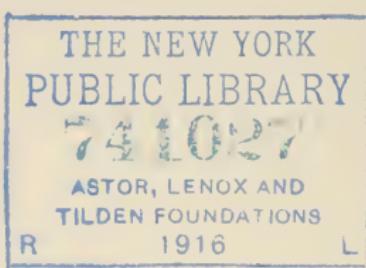
AUTHOR OF "SILENT TIMES," "MAKING THE MOST OF LIFE,"
"THE EVERY DAY OF LIFE," "GIRLS: FAULTS
AND IDEALS," ETC.

"*You cannot dream yourself into a character; you must
hammer and forge yourself one.*" — *Fr**é**quer*

THIRTY-FIRST THOUSAND

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RECENTLY a little book was published bearing the title: "Girls: Faults and Ideals." It contained quotations from letters of a number of young men concerning the points indicated in the title. Many young ladies have written to the author suggesting that there should be a book bearing on the Faults and Ideals of young men, and that the young ladies should have an opportunity to show their opinion. This seemed a fair and proper request, and this little book is the result.

J. R. M.

PHILADELPHIA.

“Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report . . . think on these things . . . these things do.”

ST. PAUL.

“Men may rise on stepping-stones
Of their dead selves to higher things.”

TENNYSON.

“Beyond each hill-top others rise,
Like ladder-rungs, toward loftier skies:
Each halt is but a breathing space
For stirrup-cup and fresher pace;
Till who dare say, ere night descend,
There can be, ever, such thing as End!”

W. W. HOUGHTON.

YOUNG MEN: FAULTS AND IDEALS.

AN old painter of Sienna, after standing for a long time in silent meditation before his canvas, with hands crossed meekly on his breast and head bent reverently low, turned away, saying, “May God forgive me that I did not do it better!”

Many people, as they come to the close of their life, and look back at what they have done with their opportunities and privileges, and at what they are leaving as their finished work, to be their memorial, can only pray with like sadness, “May God forgive me that I did not do it better!”

If there were some art of getting the benefit of our own after-thoughts about life as we go along, perhaps most of us would live more wisely and more beautifully. It is oftentimes said, “If I had my life to live over again, I would live it differently. I would avoid the mistakes that I now see I have made. I would not commit the follies and sins which have so marred my work. I would

devote my life with earnestness and intensity to the achievement and attainment of the best things." No one can get his life back to live it a second time, but the young have it in their power to live so that they shall have no occasion to utter such an unavailing wish when they reach the end of their career.

We cannot in youth really get the benefit of our own experience, but we may learn from the experience of others. We may get lessons from those who have gone over the way before us. We ought to learn from their mistakes, and to be incited and encouraged by their successes. Then we may learn even from contemporaries, who have had no more experience than ourselves. Almost anybody can tell us of quite real faults in our life and conduct, and point out to us many things in which we may live more beautifully. If we are wise we will profit by every such hint.

It is in this line that these words to young men are prepared. Two questions were sent to a number of young ladies, requesting answers:—

"1. What do you consider some of the most common faults of the young men you have met?

"2. Name some of the qualities and elements of character which you regard as essential in the ideal of young manhood."

It is not pleasant to stand up to be criticised. No one likes to be told of his faults. Yet when we think of it, we really ought to congratulate ourselves every time we learn of a new fault in ourselves—not because we have such a fault, but because we have now discovered it. For the discovery of a fault is to every one who is living worthily an opportunity for fresh conquest, and for a new advance in the evolution of a noble character. To know of a fault in one's self should be instantly to challenge its continuance. He who consents to keep and cherish in himself a sin or blemish of which he has become aware shows a pitiable weakness. He surrenders part of his life to an enemy, whom he acknowledges he cannot drive out, and whom he leaves therefore in his stronghold to be a perpetual menace and peril to him in all the future. He permits a flaw to remain in his character, building it into the heart of the structure and leaving it there, not only to be a blemish, but to be also a point of weakness, at which, some time, in great stress, his life may break and fall. Perfection is the aim of all true manhood. There is an ideal ever unattained, yet never lost sight of, which shines continually before the earnest soul, calling it ever upward toward spotless divine beauty. The smallest speck of fault must not will-

ingly be allowed to remain on the whiteness of the soul.

A certain author was about to bring out a new edition of one of his books. He sent a copy to a number of his literary friends asking them to read it critically and to mark every error they might find, every blemish or infelicity in expression, and to indicate every point at which the slightest improvement could be made. "Criticise remorselessly," he wrote to each friend, "for I want the new edition of my book to be as nearly perfection as possible." That is the way we should do with our life. No feeling of pride should ever keep us from welcoming the revelation of any flaw or imperfection in ourselves. Even the harsh and unkind criticisms of enemies we should patiently heed and consider, and if there be the smallest ground for them we should extract the sweet out of the bitter for the blessing of our own life.

No man can be his own best teacher. Exclusively self-made men are usually very badly made. They carry most of their faults uncorrected, lacking all the benefits of wise and faithful criticism. We cannot be impartial judges of our own life. We cannot see clearly our own defects and imperfections. We are charitable to our own faults. There is good sense in the Scottish poet's wish:—

“ Oh wad some power the giftie gie us
To see oursel’s as others see us!
It wad frae monie a blunder frae us,
And foolish notion.”

Most of us at least have faults of which we ourselves are entirely unaware, but which our friends and neighbors can see without magnifying-glasses. While, therefore, it requires some heroism to ask men to tell us our own faults, he is wise who does not shrink from the friendly scrutiny of those who wish only to do him good.

A most kindly spirit is manifested in all the letters which have come in answer to the questions cited above. The young ladies who write show no glee in the use of their opportunity to tell of the faults they have seen in young men. One of them, who must be singularly fortunate in the quality of her young gentlemen acquaintances says, “ I am not able to mention any faults.” Another says, “ I have come to the conclusion that faults common to young men are few that are not just as frequently found in young women.” Still another, after mentioning several points of criticism, says, “ I think, however, that men do not have either faults or virtues peculiar to the sex. I like what Miss Cobbe says: ‘ In speaking of the duties of women, we are not dealing with a different set of

virtues from those of men-heroes and men-saints, but with just the same virtues exercised in a somewhat different field.”

Yet it is evident that some young men at least have faults even in the kindly and charitable eyes of young women. A number name *self-conceit* as a too common fault. One writes, “According to their own opinion, they have more opportunities, more social advantages, and more brains than women.” Another says, “They are unwilling to be advised by older and more experienced people, thinking that they know more themselves than any other person can tell them.” Another intimates that many of the young men she knows are “boastful and think more highly of themselves than they ought to think.” Another phrases it a little differently, characterizing the fault as, “their cool self-satisfaction and expectation of worship without any effort to make themselves particularly admirable or worthy of worship.” This writer adds, however, “I feel that you will reply that this expectation could not exist were there not too much of this worship paid to young men by girls.”

In various forms and under various designations this same fault is noticed by most of the writers. This indicates its commonness. Perhaps not many of us are able to carry the consciousness of our

greatness in a modest, lowly manner, at least until we have learned the lesson amid life's hard experiences. As men grow older the self-conceit is usually taken out of them by the buffetings and hard knocks which they receive as they struggle on among their fellows. However, self-conceit is such a blemish that no young man should be content to carry its mark on his life a moment after he discovers it.

Yet this sore fault lies very close to a noble virtue — manly self-respect, the consciousness of one's dignity and worth as a child of God. The artist by a few touches on his picture can change a look of haughtiness to one of humility. The change is not so easily wrought in the character as it is on canvas, and yet it can be wrought even there, and must be if the life is to grow into full-orbed beauty. The only way to secure this transformation is by dwelling with all one's littleness and imperfections in the shadow of Christ's infinite greatness and perfection. We will never learn it by comparing ourselves with others who are little or no better than ourselves. But when we look at Christ's manhood and study its perfectness, we cannot but become conscious of our smallness and unworthiness. Nor can we ever get rid of self-conceit by merely willing to be humble and then trying to

pose in the attitude and posture of humility. The offensive element in self-conceit is self-consciousness, and it can be effaced only by becoming so absorbed in noble things outside of ourselves that we shall altogether forget ourselves.

Another fault noticed in some young men is what one calls "*grumpiness*." This writer says it is the "most common and annoying fault of the good boys she knows," and adds, "No girl would be allowed for a moment to be as critical, or as blunt and unsympathetic as boys are expected to be,— good boys, home-lovers, kind-hearted, honest Christians, but gruff and careless of their temper." This lady feels that they are rather tyrannical in their own home, especially toward sisters and even toward parents. Another writer hints at a like fault in the following cluster of unlovely things growing out of one ugly root: "The most common fault of young men is selfishness. Its name is legion; but whether called obstinacy, love of power, love of their own comfort, tyranny, irritability, or jealousy, the radical fault is selfishness, and these faults are all manifestations of some form of it."

Those who recognize these criticisms as just, concerning themselves, would do well to pay good heed to the curing of the fault. It is certainly not

one that adorns a life. It is impossible for other people to live with a man of such tyrannical spirit, one so impatient of suggestion or counsel, and have any real comfort in the companionship. One big boy of this sort in a home succeeds in making a great deal of unhappiness for those who love him best. When the evil is not cured in early years, very unfortunate is the woman who becomes the wife of this "grumpy" man. He may provide well for her in many ways, but he will torture if not break her heart by his most unmanly tyranny and his petty despotism.

Several ladies note *a lack of respect for women* as a common fault. One writes, "I would mention a lack of reverence or regard for women. A man's respect for women must begin with his own mother." Another speaks also of a lack of thoughtful consideration and says, "In these days old-time courtesy, true gentlemanliness is often wanting in young men." Another finds a common fault "in the conduct of young men toward women." This writer divides men into two classes — first, the pleasure-seeker, whose chief thought of life is to get out of it all the enjoyment possible; and second, the serious, thinking, true man. To the first class, woman is a means of amusement only; with the second, too often she is but an ideal.

Men of the first class are influenced by woman's personal appearance and power to please and gratify, regardless of her mental and moral ability. Then how many of the second class think of woman as a comrade, a fellow-partner, or friend? They idealize her. Both of these courses are wrong.

There is a truth here of which every young man should think. Woman was not created for man's selfish amusement, nor was she made to be set up on a pedestal to be worshiped. She was made to be man's helpmeet, companion, friend. She has her faults just as he has, and if she is a worthy woman she is striving just as he is to grow out of them into perfection of character. She asks no servile homage, but only the liberty to stand beside man as her brother, her equal. Yet the honoring of women is always a mark of nobleness in man. Heathen men make her a slave and degrade her. In the East a man may scarcely recognize a woman, even his own wife or mother, in public. Christianity teaches a man, however, to look upon woman as his equal and to treat her with deference and respect. He is not a gentleman who can be rude in speech or act to any woman. And these writers all say it is in companionship with his own mother and sisters that a young man first reveals his true spirit, and

in his own home that he first learns to be respectful or disrespectful.

One writer notes "*a lack of refinement* in the outward expression of life, in word and manner." The thought is that many young men are careless in this regard. "They seem not to appreciate the importance of beauty and delicacy in outward forms of life. This, I think," adds the lady, "is not a little thing, for it reacts on the ideal self the young man has in his heart." There appears to be in some minds, at least, an impression that gentleness of manner is effeminate, suitable for women, though not a manly grace. Some young men affect brusqueness, even bordering on rudeness, thinking they are cultivating a type of manliness that is to be commended. This is a mistake. True nobleness is always beautiful. Heroic strength is always gentle. Love is the law of life, and whatever is unloving is a blemish. Lack of refinement is always a disfiguring fault. A young man may not be familiar with the rules of etiquette, may not be able to pose gracefully in a drawing-room; and yet he may have a grace and gentleness of heart which will give to his bearing and acts the truest refinement. No young man can afford to grow up without the best culture in all lines that he can possibly get. Books cost but

little, and there usually are libraries within reach, and even those who are busy all the day may have their evenings when they can read and study. Then the best of all means of culture is a gentle heart within, which inspires thoughtfulness, consideration of others, the desire to please. The use of arts of manner to cover insincerity is the worst kind of hypocrisy. But love in the heart ought always to have winning expression. No one can live the thirteenth of First Corinthians and lack the truest refinement.

Many writers speak of a *lack of a worthy ambition* in many young men. "Having opportunities and abilities," says one, "they waste their lives because they fail to realize the true object and meaning of living." Says another, "Too many of them seem to have no grand aim, no aim higher than to dress well and be social favorites. They have no energy to make anything of themselves." Another names as a fault "that love of comfort which makes them too easily satisfied with things, if only the outward conditions are pleasant." Another says that "young men have time for every amusement and pleasure, but none for study and useful reading. Many of them show little desire for self-improvement." Several of the writers think that the young men of to-day are not a stal-

wart type, but are in danger of becoming effeminate, indolent, not fighting the battle of life bravely.

This is one of the perils of prosperous times when everything is going pleasantly. A young man without enthusiastic ambition is not worthy the sacred name of man. God did not make us to grovel like worms; he made us to rise to glory. Every young man should strive to make all he can of his life and to do all he can with it. The world has neither use nor room for men who are without energy and persistence. They can only be dropped out and left behind while the great column presses on. No young man must delude himself with the vain hope that his friends will look after his success and carry him along, whether he strive or not.

“ The busy world shoves angrily aside
The man who stands with arms akimbo set,
Until occasion tell him what to do;
And he who waits to have his task made out,
Shall die and leave his errand unfulfilled.”

This day of the world is not a time for easy-going. We want men of noble aspiration, of unconquerable energy, of sublime hope, who will not be contented with anything less than the best that they can make out of their life and its opportunities. An indolent young man can never by any

mere accident of happy fortune become at mid-life a man of power and great usefulness. People do not dream themselves into grand characters and lofty positions. And never was there a time when it was a grander thing to live than now, when true men have larger opportunity to do noble deeds and make a worthy record for themselves. They know not what they say who speak of the time for heroisms and valiant deeds and fine achievements as in the past.

“Mourn not for the vanished ages,
With the great, heroic men,
Who dwell in history’s pages,
And live in the poet’s pen.
For the grandest times are before us,
And the world is yet to see
The noblest worth of this old world
In the men that are to be.”

Many of my friends have spoken of *a lack of courage* as another too common fault in young men. “They fear to unite with the church,” writes one, “not because they do not recognize the duty and feel the need of so doing, but because they dread the taunts and sneers of companions.” Others speak of the same lack shown by too many in yielding to soul-destroying temptation in the face of their own convictions, simply because they

have not the courage to stem the tide of social custom. This is the way thousands of drunkards are made. Young men do not intend to drink, but the temptation comes upon them through companions, with sneer and scorn at their scruples, and in weakness they yield, thus losing in the battle of life because they are not brave enough to say No. A man without courage is a man at the mercy of all evil.

Many writers have their anxious words concerning the frequent falling of young men into the grosser vices and sins. The evils which surround the saloon and card-table are named among the dangers. One says, "Our boys are drifting. Street-corner crowds, cigar-stores, cards and, lastly, saloons, have one by one thrown their nets around them. They were only having a little fun, they said. Boys can't stay in the house all the time. We will come out all right. Poor, foolish boys!" Another names "Their associating with companions whose character is questionable." Another mentions "Swearing, intemperance, betting, lying." Another says, "They are too fond of gayety, the social glass, and card-playing."

There is something so debasing in the grosser vices to which many permit themselves to become addicted, that one would think that no noble young

man with clean hands, a pure heart, and an unsullied life would ever stoop to indulge in them even for a moment. Yet "many of them think it manly to be able to say that they can drink intoxicating liquors, swear, and run into other defiling things," writes one of my correspondents. What a sad travesty on manliness! What a desecration of God-like beauty! What a pity it is that so many young men with splendid natural abilities, capable of great things, should so fling away their birthright! Why should not the obligations of sobriety, of reverence, of purity, rest with as holy sanction upon young men as upon young women? One writer asks, "Why should not young men be as pure and modest as young girls?" Says another, "If I were to marry, I would want my husband every bit as good as myself. I recognize no law of self-respect incumbent upon one and not upon the other."

These words ought not to be lost upon young men who read them. Why indeed should any young man demand that his sister, or the young woman he makes his friend, shall live after a rule of almost angelic purity, above suspicion, free from the slightest taint, while he refuses to bring his own life and conduct under the same rule? Does our Lord's beatitude for purity mean one thing for a

young man and something a great deal loftier and whiter for a young woman? No; whatever is a stain upon true womanliness is just as dark a stain upon ideal manhood.

So much for the "faults" of young men, which some of their fair friends have pointed out. It is not implied in these words, which seem to be critical, that there are not many noble and beautiful qualities in the young men in whom some faults have been seen. On the other hand, there are thousands of young men whose lives are rich in the elements of truest manliness, whose characters are radiant with the lustre of "whatsoever things are honorable," and who are making for themselves records worthy of all praise. This is the golden age of young men. The faults that are here noted are lesser or greater blemishes on noble lives, pointed out in sincerest friendship, in the hope that by correcting them these lives shall rise to still fairer beauty and yet manlier strength.

The second part of the letters has reference to the qualities that belong to the ideal young manhood. It is more pleasant to look on this side of the subject than at the faults. It is better to try to build up than to tear down. It is here that the chief pressure of living should be exercised.

While we must not be blind to our faults and imperfections, the best way to deal with them usually is not to try to remedy them one by one, but to seek larger abundance of life, thus expelling them by the power of new affections. There are many physical weaknesses and ailments which can better be overcome, not by treating them as diseases requiring medicines, but by seeking to gain greater fulness of health. Without doubt the true method in the culture of character is not to give too much thought directly to one's defects and faults, but to seek to have the heart-life pure, strong, and full, so that it will throw off the blemishes and flaws, and fill up what is lacking in the outer life.

What are the qualities and elements of character in the true ideal of young manhood? Nearly every reply suggests honesty, integrity, truthfulness, as among the foundation elements in manly life. One enumerates "honesty, truthfulness, and courage to do right though opposed by friends. Another specifies "truthfulness, reliability." Another says "Integrity seems to be the foundation of all that is high in character." Another's ideal is, "One who has the courage to say No, when he wants to and when he ought to say it."

So it is made plain in almost every letter that the ideal of manliness in the minds of these

thoughtful young women includes *the sturdy qualities* of splendid integrity, unflinching uprightness, and undeviating truthfulness. It is needful in these days to put strong emphasis upon this side of a noble life. Many of what are esteemed successful careers altogether lack these robust elements. But worldly success is not life's final test. Even among men no character long shines out clear and bright, with honor and beauty, which has not for its central principle simple integrity. Says Lord Lytton, "A man is already of consequence in the world when it is known that he can be implicitly relied upon." And George MacDonald says, speaking of the influence of a good life in the world, "To know one person that is absolutely to be trusted will do more for a man's moral nature,—yes, and even for his spiritual nature, than will all the sermons he ever heard or ever can hear." To be able to build up such a character, to live so as to be implicitly relied upon, absolutely trusted by those who know him, certainly is an object in life worthy of any young man's striving to obtain.

It takes years of unfailing fidelity to reach such a point. No such name can be won in a community in a day. One dishonest act, one deviation from perfect integrity, one failure in moral obligation, will dim the lustre of a name. Carelessness may

do it. There are men, for example, who continually borrow little sums of money from others and forget that they owe them—let us charitably say they “forget” to pay them. There are men who are negligent about keeping promises and appointments. However good in other regards the men who thus habitually fail may be, it is impossible that they can come to be implicitly relied upon. Forgetfulness and carelessness are habits which bring many a man to ruin. Perfect integrity! Write the words on your very soul. No manhood can be really noble which does not possess this heroic quality.

Many of the letters emphasize also the *gentle side* of manliness. “The union of gentleness of manner with firmness of mind.” “He must have true politeness, which treats every one kindly.” “One who can be nearly as gentle as a woman and yet be a manly man.” “Loving and thoughtful toward parents and friends, with a shining face, cordial and kindly.” “Gentle, loving, true, pure, with all that is good, kindly, and unselfish.” “He must be brave as a lion and gentle as a woman.” “Kind and respectful to every one, and never cruel even to the least of God’s creatures.” So in nearly all the letters this gentle-heartedness is seen to shine in the ideal close alongside the robuster elements as

equally essential. "He keeps his temper under control," writes one, "is generous, courteous, kind, and, above all, unselfish. I should tremble to trust my life to a selfish man."

It is often said of Jesus, the only perfect man the world ever saw, that both the manly and womanly qualities were found in him. We know how brave and true and strong he was, and we know also how gentle he was. Behold in him the ideal manhood. No manly character is complete which lacks affectionateness and tender-heartedness. Strength without this human quality is not beautiful. Several writers refer to St. Paul's wonderful picture of noble Christian life: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report." Here we have gentleness as well as strength in "whatsoever things are lovely," linked with "whatsoever things are true."

Many incidents are related of great men, showing the kindly side of their character. One may be given in illustration. It is of Mr. Corliss, the great engine-builder. He was about erecting an addition to his shops, and it was necessary to remove a ledge of rock by blasting. As the work

progressed, a bird's nest was discovered in a crevice of the rock which the men were about to remove. "That nest will have to go," said the foreman to Mr. Corliss, pointing to the place where the robin was sitting. The two men drew near, and as the mother-bird flew away they saw five little blue eggs in the nest. Mr. Corliss found that the nest could not be moved without destroying it, and he gave orders, therefore, that the work of removing the rock should stop until the robin had hatched out her young, and until they were old enough to fly away. So the great engine-builder's interests waited while the robin sat quietly on her nest, with an air of vast importance, as if she were queen of a realm. This incident shows the gentle side of this man's character, and who will say it is not beautiful, the very adornment of his manhood?

Purity is named by many of the writers as another quality in the ideal young manhood. Writes one, "The man-soul should be as unsullied and white as the woman-soul. Does not purity cover all — purity in thought, in word, in deed?" Another says, referring to the same point: "There is no reason why young men should not be held to as high a standard of character as their sisters." Another puts it thus: "The indispensable quality is reverence for all humanity and all natural and

right relations." This lady gives an example—an artist who has had many years of Bohemian artist life, has seen every temptation of poverty and delayed recognition of his talent, but for whom now happily the tide has turned. "And he is just as good and gentle as ever. I cannot imagine an ill thought ever entering his mind. His wife is a happy woman, and not one of his pupils and models can fail to be inspired by him to purer purpose and higher ideals. I cannot see why the virtues should be of different genders. I know of none that are not equally beautiful in man and in woman."

Jesus himself said, "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God." An Apostle gave it as an essential in religious life that we keep ourselves "unspotted from the world."

Energy is another quality that is mentioned by these writers. One speaks of "perseverance," another of "strength," another of "proper ambition," while many use the word "energy" to express their thought. Evidently, thoughtful young women want to see young men make something of their life. They have little patience with indolence and little respect for a man who will not work with energy and a purpose. There is a stirring impulse in the words:—

“Get leave to work
In this world: 't is the best you get at all:
For God, in cursing, gives us better gifts
Than man in benediction. God says, ‘Sweat
For foreheads;’ men say ‘Crowns;’ and so we are
crowned —
Ay, gashed by some tormenting circle of steel
Which snaps with a secret spring. Get work! Get work!”

Some men who never get on in life blame their failure on their unfavorable circumstances. They think if their condition had only been different they would have been successful. But the way to make the most of life is not to get easy conditions; it is to take the conditions we have and by energy, faithfulness, indomitable courage, and unsparing, unrelaxing toil, to make our conditions and circumstances serve us in doing the work of life well and in building up a noble character.

“The common problem, yours, mine, every one’s,
Is, not to fancy what were fair in life
Provided it could be — but, finding first
What may be, then find how to make it fair
Up to our means. A very different thing.”

Without exception these letters name among the elements of the ideal young manhood, religion, *faith in Christ*, and loyalty to him. “My ideal

man is first a Christian," says one. "A Christ-like young man will, little by little, become like the one he is following, and will copy the qualities of his Master." "A Christian who takes Christ into his business, his pleasures, and into every part of his life." "Strength of character to stand up for Christ and be right." "There is but one pattern for us all to follow, and therefore the man who follows it most closely is nearest to perfection." Thus the letters run, putting the love of Christ as the crown of all noble manhood.

It is in Christ only that we find the true ideal of manliness realized. He is the one only perfect Man, without sin or imperfection, who though tempted in all points like as we are, yet yielded not. Then it is in the divine Christ alone that we can receive the life and grace we need, to enable us to rise into the noble ideal of manhood which he himself has set before us.

So much for the ideal of manhood. There is in the soul of every true-hearted and worthy young man a vision of beauty and nobleness which he himself earnestly desires to attain. It is radiant and without spot. Some one says, "God never yet permitted us to frame a theory too beautiful for his power to make practicable." A fair vision cannot be realized in a day — it is the work of a whole

lifetime to attain it; yet it should be kept before the eye all the time, and the effort to come up to it should never faint nor lag for an instant. Through all experiences, through trial, temptation, discouragement, opposition, defeat, and failure, and through all changes of circumstances and conditions the eye should rest unwaveringly upon the goal, and the purpose to gain it should never be abandoned. Every day should mark progress. The epitaph of the great English Historian is, "Here lies John Richard Green, Historian of the English People. He died learning." That only is true living which is ever learning, ever reaching upward and stretching forward. The heart is dead that has ceased to throb with longing for something yet better, and the hand is derelict in its duty which has slacked in its working. The goal ever lies onward. We must live and die learning, striving. We want enthusiasm. No life ever reached anything very beautiful, radiant, noble, worthy, without this fire of God burning at its heart. As Browning puts it:—

"Enthusiasm's the best thing, I repeat:
Only one can't command it; fire and life
Are all; dead matter's nothing, we agree:
And be it a mad dream, or God's very breath,

The fact's the same; belief's fire once in us
Makes of all else mere stuff to show itself;
We penetrate our life with such a glow
As fire lends wood and iron. . . .
But paint a fire it will not therefore burn;
Light one in me, I'll find it food enough!"

Then we must not forget that only God himself can make possible and practicable the realizing of our vision of manhood. A young man must never leave God out of his life. He ever needs divine inspiration and help. It is God who sets before him the radiant vision which he would attain, and it is God alone who can help him to fill out the fair pattern divinely shown to him in the Mount.

"The thoughts of beauty dawning on the soul
Are glorious heaven-gleams;
And God's eternal truth lies folded deep
In all man's lofty dreams."

"Fear not to build thine aerie in the heights
Where golden splendors lie,
And trust thyself unto thine inmost soul
In simple faith alway:
And God will make divinely real
The highest form of thine ideal."

3

